



2009 ACR/EPP Environment and Public Policy Conflict Resolution Conference

*Managing Climate Change through Collaborative Governance:
The Use and Practice of Environmental Conflict Resolution in Addressing
Policy Challenges Globally and Locally*

**June 11 – 13, 2009
Denver, Colorado**

Call for Workshop and Presentation Proposals

The Environment and Public Policy Section of the Association for Conflict Resolution (EPP/ACR) and the University of Denver's Conflict Resolution Institute welcome proposals from practitioners of dispute management, collaborative decision-making, and climate change policymakers, advocates and planners to participate as presenters in the 2009 Climate Change and Collaborative Governance Conference.

Conference Goal

The Conference seeks to bring together individuals in the fields of environmental conflict resolution, collaborative decision-making, and deliberative democracy, with business, public/non-profit, scientists, and public officials from all levels of government to:

- ***Share knowledge of current tools*** for effective conflict management and collaborative decision-making around environmental and public policy issues;
- ***Explore innovative strategies and practices*** for resolving complex policy disputes and promoting collaborative decision-making; and
- ***Develop a foundation for future efforts*** to apply dispute resolution and collaborative approaches to the management of climate change issues.

Local, regional, state and national governments, civic organizations and private entities are increasingly confronted with the causes, consequences, and conflicts of climate change. Addressing these challenges is a daunting task: it requires us to develop, articulate and promote broad-scale change, in the face of significant conflicts over values, interests and uncertainty. Collaborative governance systems have already demonstrated a powerful capacity for promoting sustainability and addressing other environmental challenges. As such, they hold forth promise as a critical tool for managing greenhouse gases, adapting to climate change, and ameliorating impacts on those who are affected most directly by climate change.

This conference will explore potential paths to effectively respond to these emerging challenges. We will examine the practice of collaborative decision-making and conflict resolution not only from the perspective of climate change,

where its usage is fairly recent, but also from the wide range of environmental and public policy issues that are part of our ongoing practice.

In keeping with the urgency of the challenges associated with climate change, we will use our time in Denver not simply to assess current practices, but also as a launch pad to explore and design specific future actions that will enhance the effective use of collaborative decision-making in addressing these challenges.

Structure of Conference

The conference will be organized along five themes, each introduced by a keynote speaker or invited panel. Following these presentations, conference participants will further develop these themes in concurrent sessions. Sessions will run along two tracks: one which focuses specifically on issues associated with managing climate change through collaborative decision-making and the other which focuses more generally on issues of professional practice for the management of conflict in other environmental and policy arenas.

Description of Themes

The critical need for timely public attention and action on climate change and other environmental and public policy issues – in the face of extreme complexity and uncertainty – will continue to stress traditional decision-making processes. The interjurisdictional dimensions of this problem, ranging from local communities to international bodies, pose additional difficulties.

- What are the challenges on (or over) the horizon? How can we begin preparing to meet these challenges? What groundwork can be laid now?
- What are the barriers being faced by decision-makers, the “sticking points”?
- Can collaborative processes help? If so, are other approaches needed, what are they, and why are they not being used?

Building on discussions started at the 2006 ACR/EPP Conference and continued in conferences since then, we will explore the relationship between the practice of dispute resolution, collaboration and public participation and efforts to address long-term problems such as global climate change. We will examine how such work fits into existing political decision-making processes, how it alters those processes over time, and its impact on managing complex societal problems.

- What does our practice consist of today and how is it evolving?
- What forms of collaborative intervention most effectively promote the development of long term inclusive and participatory institutions and more effective policy around complex public policy issues in the US and internationally?
- How might we best organize ourselves to address communitywide and regionally scaled conflicts, which involve a broad spectrum of citizens and interest groups over long periods of time?

Despite difficulties, actions to alleviate and adapt to climate change have already been enacted and are being implemented. Moreover, other complex environmental and public policy issues have also been effectively addressed using collaborative approaches to decision-making and governance.

Key Challenges and Emergent Issues

Nature of Our Practice

Models and Transferability of Conflict Resolution and Collaborative Processes

Linking Science, Information and Inquiry to Policymaking

- What lessons have been learned from current and past use of collaborative processes to address complex environmental and policy issues?
- What approaches from other complex multi-jurisdictional issues are applicable to climate change? In what ways does climate change differ and how might collaborative approaches be adapted to account for these differences?
- How has decision-making (both within and external to government) been altered as a result of collaborative efforts? How have these changes been institutionalized?

Key to managing complex environmental and policy change is the effective linkage of knowledge to policymaking. Our need to act will continue to outpace the specificity and reliability of our knowledge.

- How can planning and decision-making proceed in the face of uncertainties?
- What tools, such as joint fact-finding and visualization technologies, can we draw on to help decision-makers access and use information to best advantage?
- What do we know about the relationship between scientific knowledge, local knowledge, and other types of knowledge? How might we enhance the integrated use of all types of relevant knowledge into environmental and public policy decision-making?
- What new approaches to understanding, accepting, and managing scientific uncertainty are needed, in order to take efficient and effective action?

Leveraging the Tools

Finally, as professionals, we seek to promote a widespread awareness of how conflict resolution and collaborative approaches in public decision-making can be used as a tool for addressing climate change and other complex public policy issues.

- What messages and actions can we take that will most effectively promote collaborative decision-making for addressing climate change and other complex social issues to politicians and the public?
- How active should mediators and facilitators be in advocating for negotiations and dialogues as a preferred approach to public decision-making?
- What are the limits for these tools; when might they be inappropriate or nonproductive?

OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE

We invite proposals for the concurrent, 90-minute breakout sessions that follow each keynote address or panel. We seek proposals that explore questions of collaborative decision-making and conflict resolution both in climate change and in other environmental and policy fields.

Preference will be given to proposals that integrate multiple speakers into cohesive 90-minute sessions, but we also encourage individuals to submit proposals for presentations. While evaluating proposals, if the conference planners feel that two or more proposals could be combined into one session, we may suggest the idea and give you a chance to consider it before making our final decisions.

Submit proposals by March 1st via email to Michael Elliott, c/o Jodi Mansbach at jodi.mansbach@gatech.edu.

Please identify by referencing “Conference Proposal” in the subject line.

Ask questions or explore expressions of interest prior to submitting your proposal by contacting John Jostes at jjostes@cox.net.

For more information about the Environment and Public Policy Section of the Association for Conflict Resolution, please contact Section Co-Chairs Carolyn Penny at clpenny@ucdavis.edu or Harry Manasewich at hfactor@dr@aol.com.

Proposal Requirements:

Breakout sessions can address one of the five themes or some other topic of general interest to conflict resolution, collaborative decision-making and climate change professionals.

Please format your proposal using the following sub-headings or categories so we can easily evaluate and compare proposals.

- *Contact Information:* Name, Title, Email, Phone(s), Mailing Address
- *Theme you wish to focus on:* Indicate whether your proposal relates to one or more of the five themes or to a topic of your choice.
- *Who:* Identify all individuals who are contributing to your proposal and indicate their roles (panelist, moderator, co-leader, etc.). Please also note the presenters’ experience in presenting at professional conferences.
- *What:* What do you propose to present? What question(s) will you be trying to answer?
- *Why:* Please describe, briefly, why you propose offering this session, and why you think conference attendees would be interested in participating in it.
- *How:* Do you want to do a presentation, organize a panel, facilitate a round-table discussion, have the group break into smaller groups, do a simulation, etc? Describe what the session will look and feel like.

Criteria for Evaluation

While proposals that meet more than one criterion are desired, proposals that are particularly strong in just one area will also be seriously considered. We seek proposals that will:

- Explore one or more of the conference themes;
- Present and explore unique types of collaborative tools, case studies, compelling “stories” or systematic assessments;
- Provide practical and usable information or lessons for conference participants;
- Promote interaction and discourse going beyond discussion of individual case studies; and
- Link organizing questions within a given theme or between themes.

Schedule

- Deadline for submission: **Sunday, March 1, 2009**
- Notice of decision by late March

Publication

The Fall issue of *ACResolution*, the magazine published by the Association for Conflict Resolution, will focus on conflict resolution and environmental issues. Proposals submitted for conference presentations may be considered for publication in this special issue. Watch for the call for proposals in mid-May or visit www.ACRnet.org for more information.